



Adv. English 2 Project Outline

Literary Analysis Essay DUE: 11/2/2025

Literary Analysis Essay: "The Masque of the Red Death"

Goal: To write a five-paragraph literary analysis essay arguing how Edgar Allan Poe uses specific symbolism to develop a central theme in the short story, "The Masque of the Red Death."

1. Introduction Paragraph (Approx. 5-7 sentences)

- **Hook:** Start with an engaging general statement about fear, mortality, or escapism.
- **Context:** Introduce the story and author (Edgar Allan Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death"). Briefly summarize the story's main plot (Prospero trying to escape the plague).
- **Thesis Statement** (The most important sentence): This must clearly state the author, the title, the primary theme you will discuss, and the two main symbols Poe uses to convey that theme.
 - *Example Thesis Structure* (Do not use this exact example): In "The Masque of the Red Death," Edgar Allan Poe uses the seven colored rooms and the Ebony Clock to develop the chilling theme that wealth and isolation cannot protect anyone from the inevitability of death.

2. Body Paragraph 1: Symbolism (Focus on Symbol #1)

- **Topic Sentence:** State the main point of the paragraph, focusing on how your first chosen symbol works.
- **Evidence:** Provide 1-2 direct quotes (textual evidence) from the story that describe or involve this symbol.
- **Analysis:** Explain in detail (2-3 sentences) what the symbol represents (e.g., The clock represents the passing of time and life).
- **Conclusion Sentence:** Connect the symbol's meaning back to your overall thesis/theme.

3. Body Paragraph 2: Symbolism (Focus on Symbol #2)

- **Topic Sentence:** State the main point of the paragraph, focusing on your second chosen symbol.
- **Evidence:** Provide 1-2 direct quotes from the story.
- **Analysis:** Explain what this second symbol represents and how it contributes to the atmosphere or meaning of the story.
- **Conclusion Sentence:** Connect the symbol's meaning back to your overall thesis/theme.

4. Body Paragraph 3: Theme Development

- **Topic Sentence:** State the main point of the paragraph, focusing directly on how the story's events (not just the symbols) support the theme.
- **Evidence:** Provide a final piece of textual evidence (quote or specific detail) that demonstrates the theme in action (e.g., the reaction of the guests).
- **Analysis:** Explain how this final piece of evidence proves your theme is central to the story's message.
- **Conclusion Sentence:** Summarize the paragraph's connection to the thesis.

5. Conclusion Paragraph (Approx. 4-6 sentences)

- **Restate Thesis:** Say your thesis again, but use different words.
- **Summarize:** Briefly review your main points (the two symbols and the theme).
- **Final Thought/Impact:** End with a powerful closing statement about the enduring message of the story or why the theme is still relevant today.

Tips for Success

- **Literary Present Tense:** Always write about the story as if it is happening now. Use present tense verbs (e.g., Poe writes, Prospero hides, the clock chimes).
- **Use Transitions:** Start body paragraphs and connect ideas within them using transition words and phrases (e.g., Furthermore, In addition, Significantly, Despite this).
- **Cite Evidence Correctly:** For short story quotes, place the page number (or just the author's name) in parentheses after the quote. Example: "The 'Red Death' had long devastated the country" (Poe).
- **Go Deeper than Definition:** Don't just name a symbol; analyze it. Explain why Poe chose that specific color, object, or setting to convey his message.
- **Formal Tone:** Do not use slang, contractions (like don't or it's), or the pronouns I, you, or we.